

Kanine Korner

By Francis X. Lohmann

In their many roles as helpmates to man, dogs have been especially valued as companions for the lonely, invalid, and elderly. Most dog owners and breeders have a fund of true stories about dogs bringing new interest in life to people devastated by emotional blows.

At least two famous authors have described the comfort they received from pets. The English poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was devotedly attended by her beloved Cocker Spaniel, Flush, during her long years of illness. Colette, the French novelist, wrote of solace created by her pets.

NOW, MEDICAL doctors and psychiatrists are paying serious attention to dogs' therapeutic uses in help patients recuperate from physical illness or emotional disturbance.

Dogs are frequently "prescribed" for people who are at odds with life for a variety of reasons: grief over the death of family or friends, old age with accompanying lack of occupation and purpose.

Care of a dog, especially a puppy, brings immediate responsibility. The animal needs its owner for care and affection. The dog's acute dependency forces the owner to act positively, to think

about something besides himself and his problems.

A PUPPY'S bubbling personality is hard to resist, even for the most depressed person. The pup innocently demands love, with no strings attached, and returns it many times over.

Doctors have noticed physical as well as mental benefits from pet care. For example, one doctor recalls an elderly lady, living alone, who'd begun to neglect herself. She was subsisting on tea and toast meals until she acquired a Chihuahua. Daily trips to the market for dog food also resulted in her purchasing food for her own dinner.

Mental and physical improvements frequently work hand-in-hand. An animal shelter placed a puppy with a family of a youngster who had undergone several leg operations. The child seemed to have lost incentive to get well. His parents were dis-

traught and his sister resentful of the extra attention he received. Their doctor recommended a puppy.

NO SOONER had the puppy come into the house than his antics made the boy laugh, for the first time in several months. Later, his romping encouraged the lad to extend himself physically and still later he was willing to use his crutches so that he might eventually take Bowser for walks. As the boy improved, family morale rose accordingly.

Doctors have also discovered that the simple exercise of stroking and brushing a dog can be excellent therapy for people with certain types of hand or arm afflictions.

Hospitals with facilities to keep a few dogs as pets for the patients find the animals become important rehabilitation factors.

CHILDREN'S natural af-

finity for dogs is especially helpful in clinical and home treatment of disturbed youngsters.

Physiotherapist Boris M. sometimes counteract a poor home atmosphere. If divorce is pending or other tensions are present, the child is invariably caught in the middle, unable to understand and accept the situation. A dog provides stability. He is always there, uncritical, unthreatening and always loving.

Disturbed children need to receive and reciprocate affection, usually more than other children. A dog is always willing to lavish attention on his owner and gives the owner a warm, responsive creature to fondle to his heart's content.

DR. LEVINSON first realized dogs are helpful in office therapy when a young

patient was attracted to his dog. The dog created mutual grounds of interest, allowing a natural rapport to quickly develop between the child and the doctor.

In another case, one of Dr. Levinson's patients, an adopted boy, was convinced he'd been abandoned by his real mother because he was "bad." Reassurance by the adopted parents did no good; the child became increasingly fearful that his supposedly wicked characteristics would reveal themselves and his foster mother and father would desert him, too.

Showing interest in one of Dr. Levinson's pets, the boy was told the animal had been adopted from a local animal shelter. The child was fascinated and asked for the story again and again. He gradually accepted the explanation that the pet was selected over all others for his unique qualities and was

a much-loved member of the household. The doctor attributes the turning point toward improvement from this incident.

IF THE DOG is being selected for therapeutic use, care must be taken to choose an animal of calm, intelligent, good-natured temperament, whose physical care will not require more than the owner can provide.

Using dogs for therapeutic purposes is a relatively new development in medical practice. But doctors are becoming convinced that attention should be devoted to discovering the dog's full potential as a tool of healing.

Listen to Francis X. Lohmann's radio version of Kanine Korner, Monday through Friday at 4:30 p.m. over Station KTYM, 1460 Kcs.

Bandaged Man Robs Attendant

A man with bandages covering his face and neck held up an attendant at Mohawk Gas Station, 18910 Crenshaw Blvd., early Monday morning, escaping with \$40 cash and a \$10 chrome money changer.

The attendant told police he was washing off the service area of the station at 3:40 a.m. when the bandaged man in his late 20s appeared, pulling out a blue steel automatic.

Twice, the suspect demanded money and twice the attendant refused. Suspect then forcibly removed the chrome changer from the victim's belt and forced him to hand over the cash in his wallet.

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